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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2423
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FOR NEA/FO - GRAY; NEA/MAG - HOPKINS AND HARRIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/04/2017
TAGS: PREL PGOV PINR TS
SUBJECT: BEN ALI'S MEDICAL AILMENTS REQUIRE BI-WEEKLY
TREATMENT

REF: A. 06 TUNIS 2237
1B. 06 TUNIS 0055
1C. 05 TUNIS 2265
1D. 05 TUNIS 2148

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S/NF) According to the German Ambassador Peter Schmidt, Tunisian President Ben Ali is suffering from multiple medical ailments, for which he is treated by a German doctor every two weeks. Amb. Schmidt said that Ben Ali's medical conditions include arthritis, insomnia, and psychological issues (NFI). This information was conveyed in the course of an hour-long courtesy call with the Ambassador on January 3.

12. (S/NF) Comment: Although the German Ambassador mentioned nothing about Ben Ali's reported prostate cancer, his information otherwise tracks with previous reports we have heard about Ben Ali's health situation, which is a frequent topic of conversation in the Tunisian rumor mill (Reftels). Amb. Schmidt has been in Tunisia just over two years, and appeared confident in his knowledge about the details of the medical visits by the German medical doctor. We consider him a credible source of information on the topic. End Comment.
GODEC